



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

May 12, 2005

News Release

ICE INVESTIGATION LEADS TO GUILTY PLEA OF A MANUFACTURING COMPANY

CHARLESTON, S.C.—U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents announced here today that a manufacturing company has pleaded guilty to violations of under reporting the true weight of shipped goods.

This plea culminates a 3-year ICE lead investigation of the Premier Manufacturing Company (Premier). The investigation was launched Jan. 2002 following a tip from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

“This investigation reflects the spirit of cooperation between CBP and ICE, and demonstrates our resolve in enforcing the customs revenue laws of the United States,” said Patrick McDavid, resident agent-in-charge in Charleston. “Those who think that they will break our laws undetected need to think twice. DHS partner agencies are working closely to find you.”

The investigation revealed that Premier had been importing cigarettes from Spain, China, and Greece since 1995 and grossly under-reporting the weights of the product in order to reduce the amount of duty. As a condition of the plea agreement Premier will pay the duty owed plus interest accrued bringing the total amount to \$3,557,051.97. The company will also pay a criminal fine of \$100,000.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.